

# Ancient Paths – Part V

*Old fashioned parents and old fashioned kids changing culture forever in their corner of the world.*

*By: David Monk*

Christian homeschoolers, as a movement, are profoundly countercultural. They are not this way solely because they are rebellious (although strains of this virus may be found in some of us), they are this way out of determination to protect their families. An often-quoted figure recently reported by George Barna indicates over 75% of American young people who are raised in church stop attending in their twenties. In the face of this horrifying reality we must conclude that for our children to be committed Christians they must be countercultural, even at church. We can also see that if we parents follow the lead of most other Christian parents around us we may have little hope for our children's souls. To succeed we must be different. To avoid the waterfall over which the torrent of our fellow Christian families are hurtling, we must turn our homes against the flow, pull hard, pray for help, and hold fast to what firm ground we can find. Our struggle for our own homes will inevitably provide firm ground to which other families may cling. This, we believe, can begin a cultural transformation with far-reaching implications.

The Christian homeschool vision presented in this series of articles has proposed new ways of looking at educa-



tion, families, husbands and wives, and siblings. But as Christians our mission is not just to preserve our families; it is to influence the world.

Over the past 25 years the homeschool movement has birthed profound changes in what we teach our children, not just how we teach them. These changes span the fields of politics, history, philosophy, and the arts. Additionally, the homeschool movement is starting to make a difference in how we act, and not just what we know. Therefore, homeschool families are becoming more involved in politics and law, in church leadership and missions, in journalism and in film. These elements of their vision give homeschoolers means through which to better their communities and culture far beyond their own homes.



## **Forgotten subjects – forgotten truths....**

Over the past 25 years, Christian homeschoolers have been trend-setters in education. Not just in methodology, but in content. In the field of science, for example, we have witnessed the growing field of earth science built around a literal 7-day creation model. This is a fascinating and active field of research and the resulting models for the formation of prominent geological features are dramatically different than the traditional old-earth models. While others learn about this in seminars, homeschoolers have been the first to incorporate young earth geology into their science curriculum.

In the field of history, homeschoolers have lead the way again but this time as a conservative force standing against the revisionist trends of the last 100 years. Homeschoolers dig out source documents to learn what people of the time have written about the events of their time rather than blindly trusting modern “experts”. Homeschoolers have also revived the stories of God's providence in history. For example, homeschooled children probably know the stories about “bullet-proof George Washington”, or of the prayer time at the constitutional convention, or of the “fighting preachers” of

the American Revolution. Beyond homeschool circles, this heritage is almost completely lost.

Christian homeschoolers also tend to teach subjects which are missing altogether in the curriculum of others. For example, homeschoolers are among the first to teach worldview and apologetics as a subject. In doing this they emphasize a deep understanding of Christianity and they teach the ability to contrast it with the philosophies of our modern culture. They also teach rhetoric or debate as a separate subject. In this field they teach communication skills such as argumentation, essay writing, oral presentations as essential life skills. By doing this they help their children to be able to articulate their views well and to be able to make compelling arguments. Apart from select classical schools, homeschoolers may be the only pre-collegiate educators doing this today. Politics and government have been restored to the curriculum as well in homeschool families. They don't just do 6 months of obligatory 'constitution and government' using some of the duller texts ever written, they really study it. In many cases, they incorporate grass roots political action as part of the study plan. Field trips often include a trip to see their local representative, a trip to Washington DC, or campaigning for a worthy candidate!

Therefore, what Christian homeschoolers teach their children prepares them better than any others to impact their culture. But the best education in the world does nothing to impact our culture unless it is accompanied with action. Here again, it is clear that Christian homeschoolers lead the way.

### **Neglected activities - returned to prominence and respect.**

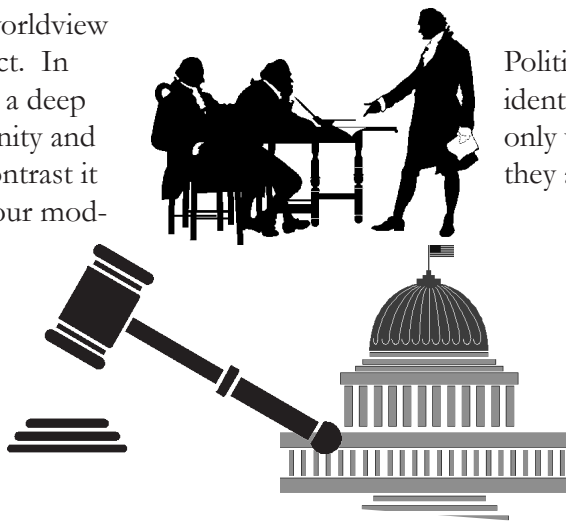
Dr. Francis Schaeffer argues convincingly in *Escape from Reason*, the second of his influential trilogy contrasting biblical Christianity with modern thought, that there are no secular fields of work, or professions. He stands against the idea that work as a pastor, missionary, with an evangelistic organization, or even as a Christian philosopher is more spiritually significant than work as

an engineer, medical professional, teacher, government official, or lawyer. All the world is Christ's dominion, he argues, and we his servants should glorify Him through all aspects of life and culture. Homeschoolers, whether familiar with Dr. Schaeffer's work or not, have put these ideas into practice.

Political action has become almost universally identified with homeschoolers. They are not only well informed about the political process, they are a force to be reckoned with when it comes to grass roots activism. In our own state so many homeschoolers have recently gotten involved in statewide politics that one recent election night victory party looked like a homeschool reunion! Homeschoolers are not only campaigning, they are beginning to run for office. In Colorado, 5 members of the state house of representatives are homeschool parents, one is a former member of the board of directors of Christian Home Educators of Colorado.

Law is another field of strong interest to homeschoolers and homeschool graduates. We have a special appreciation for this profession because our freedom to homeschool was carved out in our country by a series of court challenges, new legislation, and providential judgments. The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) has modeled for us what dedicated, Christian legal teams can do to defend the rights of citizens and literally make life better for mom teaching at the kitchen table. As a result, homeschool graduates often choose careers in law or advocacy to fight the battles for the next generation.

Nursing and other health care fields are another common interest among homeschool grads. Literature, journalism, and film have attracted some of the brightest and best of homeschoolers to apply their talents in these areas of artistic expression and communication. When homeschoolers get involved in these areas of culture, they are hoping to impact them. As they have seen education changed during their lifetime, they aspire to bring the truth of the Gospel to each of these traditionally "secular" fields of work.



Naturally, missions and pastoral work attracts homeschoolers attention as well. I do not mean to imply that these fields are of less significance to homeschoolers. They are getting a great deal of attention. The exploding family integrated church movement, for example, has been fueled almost exclusively by homeschooling pastors, homeschooling elders, and homeschooling families.



Still others are committing their time, money, and efforts to overseas missionary work, training as missionaries themselves, or supporting their children in missionary projects.

**In summary....**

The Christian homeschool movement has a broad vision. This vision is not merely an educational methodology which overcomes the problems of peer dependency, classroom inefficiencies, and school violence. It is the collection of many diverse ideas that have caught fire in the lives of a small group of families who have been

extraordinarily blessed by God. Through these simple families, I believe God is doing a profound work. He is restoring a family vision, transforming our culture, and turning the hearts of fathers to their children. It should not surprise us that God would use the efforts of simple men and women to accomplish great things. That is the way He usually works. He uses men like Matthew to write the Gospels, women like Esther to save the Jews, shepherds like David to rule his people, and disciples like Elisha to witness His miracles. God does not usually ask us to go out and change the world, just to make a difference in our little corner of it. He orchestrates the whole. So as humble mothers rub the sleep out of their eyes and nurse their babies, as fathers sit up late with their teen-aged daughters, as sisters tie their brother's shoes, and young men study their bible lesson, God is doing a great work. And through us who wind our way down these ancient paths He brings blessings to our modern world.

